

LECTURE ON CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AT THE NEW NATIONAL THEATER

W. D. McCrackan Asserts God Is Not Creator of Evil, and Right Understanding of Him Destroys Evil.

That interest in the subject of Christian Science is on the increase in Washington was evident yesterday afternoon. The lecture which had been announced for that time at the New National Theater drew an audience of representative citizens from nearly all walks of life. The size of the audience was limited to the size of the theater.

The lecture was given under the auspices of the local Christian Science Church, First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Washington. The lecturer was introduced by William S. Campbell, Christian Science Committee on publication for Washington, who said:

"In every activity of daily living that we chronicle in years we bear testimony to an event so momentous in the world's history that it has become the basis of a new calendar.

"That event was the beginning of the Christian era. It was ushered in with the glad announcement, 'On earth peace, good will toward men.' Nineteen hundred years have traced their way across the scroll of time, but the record has not been altogether a pleasing one. There is still much to be desired.

"In this age there has come a new translation of this message of peace and good will, a translation in the new tongue predicted by the gospel writer.

"Thirty-three years ago a small and seemingly weak church was organized in the city of Boston to maintain and perpetuate this new translation of the divine message. To-day the branches of that organization form a chain of churches that encircle the earth. The missionary evangel that has established these churches is the missionary evangel of healing.

"Last year a representative of The Mother Church was commissioned to carry greeting and good cheer to these churches in the far-away places of the earth. He has accomplished his world tour, and is with us again. I take pleasure in introducing to you William D. McCrackan, M. A., C. S. B., member of the Board of Lectureship of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Mass., who will speak to us of Christian Science."

Mr. McCrackan spoke as follows:

We are living in an age of change. To-day more than ever before the words of the Apocalypse come to mind—"the former things are passed away." Behold, I make all things new." (Rev. 21: 4, 5.)

Probably at no time in the history of the world has the new displaced the old with such startling rapidity. A survey of world conditions to-day reveals the fact that explorations, projects and hopes which have long stimulated the imagination of mankind have become accomplished facts in our own day. Within a few years has come the fulfillment of centuries of desire. A final conquest of the earth, the sea, and the air, is in progress. Portions of the earth's surface which a short time ago were left blank on the map now are marked by accurate surveys. The bottom of the sea is being explored and the ocean currents are traced across the deep from continent to continent. The air, which has so long baffled man's attempt to conquer, is now being navigated. To-day man can not only transport himself, with ever increasing rapidity, across the earth and the sea, but also through the air.

Such achievements are not accidental. What is it that has made possible these multifarious developments which we are witnessing to-day?

When all aspects of the case are considered it will be understood that what we see in operation to-day is really a mental change. Mankind is experiencing a mental transformation. Mind has made possible the conquest of the earth, the sea, and the air. Back of the material contrivances which startle the world to-day Mind is at work, directing willing arms and hands, and

Mind will continue to lay bare a multitude of useful inventions as mankind ripens and matures mentally.

Now, that which concerns us in this lecture is not, primarily, the conquest of the earth, the sea, and the air. Marvelous as that conquest appears to the human senses, it sinks into insignificance when compared with the conquest of sin, sickness, and death, which is being accomplished by Christian Science through the recognition of God as the divine Mind, the creator and controller of the universe, including man; the Mind which not only forgives our iniquities, but also heals all our diseases.

This is the real wonder of the age, this discovery of the Science which causes the passing away of former things and the making of all things new, which explores mental phenomena and lays bare the powerlessness of evil, which teaches the omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of infinite good, which brings the recognition of Immanuel, or "God with us," and so makes possible the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah:

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

"Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." (Isaiah 35: 5, 6.)

In such an age, characterized by improvements all along the line of human endeavor, Christian Science comes before you for your courteous and kindly consideration. It claims your attention because it is the science or understanding of that which is eternal and indestructible, itself unmoved in the presence of changing beliefs, because founded upon the Rock of Ages.

After more than forty years of trial and test, during which time it has compassed the destruction of much evil and built up the substance of much good in human consciousness, Christian Science stands before the world to-day approved by reason of its good works. In the midst of an ebbing and flowing tide of opinions concerning theology, medicine, and science, Christian Science stands firm, proving itself to be a stable support for the faint and weary, a guide for the distracted and lost, a solace for the sorrowing, a cure for the disabled and suffering. It is an established fact in modern history, and in no sense a debatable question, needing no defense and no apology, but bringing with it its own justification in good deeds.

FULFILLS THE LAW.

Let me assure all those who are within reach of my voice that Christian Science comes not as a destroyer, but as a builder; not to disturb the foundation laid by Jesus, the Christ, and His disciples and apostles, but to build upon this same foundation a superstructure worthy of His teachings and of His works. Jesus said that He came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law. This is the mission of Christian Science, to fulfill, to so explain the nature of God that he who runs may read and understand and in the end attain eternal life. Thus the teachings of Christian Science do not imply that God, who constitutes the basis, foundation, and principle of all true religion, ever changes or progresses; not that the teachings of Jesus, the Christ, the Founder of Christianity, need to be revised or the Bible rewritten. We read in the Scriptures that with God there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning; we also believe that the precepts and warnings of Jesus can never become antiquated, and that the Bible of our fathers, the great treasure-house of Christendom, when spiritually interpreted by Christian Science, suffices for our daily needs. The thread of gold which gleams throughout the fabric of the Bible will shine forth forever to be apprehended by the receptive thought everywhere. So it is not a new Bible which Christian Science contemplates, but one and the same Bible, explained in a spiritually progressive manner. It is not a new God which it proclaims, but the only true God, our Father which is in heaven. It makes no attempt at an improved Christ, for there is but one Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, perfect, eternal, and indestructible.

But there are certain particulars in which Christian Science differs from the generally accepted doctrines of religion. First of all Christian Science calls for a very decided change in the human point of view, in man's comprehension of eternal verities. It means the application of Science to subjects which popular thought has in times past been taught to regard as shadowy and visionary. It throws the strong light of Science upon the nature and attributes of Deity, upon the teachings and works of the Christ, and it makes clear and emphasizes the essential, im-

perishable import of the Bible's spiritual message. The general opinion of mankind does not credit religion with any great degree of certainty and definiteness. And yet, if the matter be given a moment's quiet consideration it must be evident that if there is any certainty or definiteness, any exact knowledge or science about anything anywhere in the immensity of infinity, surely that exact knowledge ought to be applicable to the Maker of all that is, to Him who has said through His prophet Isaiah: "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens; when I call unto them, they stand up together." Spiritual facts are not shadowy beliefs, not random guesses, nor do they vanish at the touch of careful investigation and painstaking research; rather do they loom up larger, more substantial, the clearer the investigator's logic, the stronger his powers of observation, the freer he is in heart and mind from the fetters of antiquated opinions, the farther he advances in his study of the real and eternal.

Christian Science calls upon mankind for a frank and fearless revision of its own beliefs about the unchanging God, His man and His universe. This age, which is not afraid to fly in the face of the sun on filmy wings, is asked to display the necessary courage to pass in review the things which pertain to its own salvation from false gods. Why should not right and just views concerning God and His universe be capable of more precise statement? Why should it be thought a thing unreasonable with any one that God can become more definitely understood by the average man than has been the case in the past? Why should not the understanding of how to grow in grace, how to deepen and broaden one's spiritual concepts, progress according to law? And why should not this knowledge concerning the fountainhead of all knowledge, the Giver of all good gifts, the absolute eternal Principle of all life, in whom we live, and move, and have our being—why should not this knowledge constitute demonstrable Science?

Christian Scientists believe that it does; that Jesus pointed out the only true, final, and real knowledge when He said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." WHAT IS GOD? Every thinking man finds himself, sooner or later, face to face with the all-important and all-absorbing question. What is God? In summarizing the teaching of Christian Science for the student, Mrs. Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, gives the answer to that question in her work, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures: God is incorporeal, divine, supreme, infinite Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, Love" (p. 465).

Upon a correct comprehension of God depends the happiness, the peace, the true prosperity, and the true usefulness of mankind. Nay, more—and this is a point which may seem novel to many—Christian Science shows that the true health of mankind is determined by their understanding of God and His Christ. Not only is this correct and scientific knowledge proved to be beneficial to man in his daily avocations, in his home, in his business, in his individual affairs, and in his participation in the affairs of the nation, but it exerts a beneficial effect upon the physical condition of men, women, and children, and heals sickness, as well as sin and sorrow.

Let us then consider some of these definitions of God as given in the Scriptures and quoted in the Christian Science text-book, and then let us carry them to their logical conclusions. Take, for example, the definition of God given by Jesus to the Samaritan woman when He said "God is Spirit." What must be one of the inevitable conclusions in regard to the essential nature of man which is to be drawn from this definition? If God is Spirit, then the real man of His creation, who is made in His image and likeness, as the Bible assures us, and therefore partakes of His nature, must be spiritual, i. e., must express and manifest Spirit. The real man's life must be Spirit, his faculties must be spiritual. Furthermore, as the image and likeness of God, man, as he really is, must be complete, happy, wholesome, and healthy. He cannot deny his parentage or bring discredit upon his ancestry. He must be eternal and indestructible now, this ideal man, the son of God.

WHAT IS MAN?

Perhaps in no particular does Christian Science differ more from the generally accepted doctrines of religion than in the view which it takes concerning the essential nature of man. Prevailing theories and doctrines hale man before a supposed bar of injustice, and condemn him before he has been heard. Contrary to the practice of the law throughout the centuries, he is considered guilty until he can prove himself innocent. Commonly accepted theology has assumed that without any choice upon his part man has been born a sinner, has inherited evil propensities, tendencies, and idiosyncrasies, which invite disaster, and that his chance of being saved from this inherent evil is comparatively slight. The commonly accepted theories of physiology and anatomy treat man as a material body so delicately fashioned that the slightest jar in the wrong place may destroy his usefulness and rob him of life. If by any chance he should escape the consequences of his evil propensities and be saved from sin, he is almost sure to fall into the coils of disease and become physically disabled. These theories place man's mind in the brain and his soul somewhere else in the body, generally in the heart. But, wherever placed, the mind and soul of this miserable sinner are never safe from the assaults of the accuser. He is believed to be the sport of circumstances and the victim of discord. Christian Science comes to declare man aright. It invites him before the bar of justice, where his real nature may be set forth and his tormentors condemned. It furnishes the evidence that man, made in the image and likeness of God, is innocent, inherently good, naturally happy, and of noble purpose. It shows that man is by nature healthy as well as good, that God is His Mind and His Soul, that His future is assured, for he is immortal and indestructible like his Creator, safe in the bosom of the Father, abiding under the shadow of the Almighty.

GOD IS LOVE.

Let us now consider the definition of God given by John when he said, "God is Love." Do we carry that definition to its logical conclusion? One such conclusion must be the following: If God is Love, then we cannot conceive of Him as creating evil. Therefore, Christian Science teaches that God is not the author of evil in any of its forms. He did not create it, since it could never lodge in His thought for an instant, else He were not wholly good and the Principle governing the universe were not wholly reliable. Evil has no origin in Spirit, no entity nor reality of God's making and no eternity, but is always a false concept, assailing the mind of mortal man until such time as its lying nature is laid bare and its futile, transitory pretenses cease to frighten. Evil has no standing before God. Those who dwell "in the secret place of the most High" need not fear its empty threats, but, asserting their divine rights, may rise, in the words of the apostle Paul, "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

There is much comfort to struggling humanity in the conviction that God does not authorize the miseries of our earthly experience. This conviction is the first step toward the realization that these very miseries, lacking divine sanction, cannot have any real entity or existence, and must perforce have a fictitious origin and an unreal nature. At this point the question naturally presents itself, if evil is not of God's creation, then what is it, and what is its origin? The essential nature of evil has proved a puzzle to mankind at large, and yet many centuries ago it was laid bare by the Founder of the Christian religion when he said of personified evil that he was "a liar and the father of it." Mrs. Eddy, following the teachings of Jesus, has described evil in so many words as inherently a falsity, a mistake, an illusion, and a delusion about something true. She has given the general name of error to evil in all its forms and thereby uncovered its essential nature to human apprehension. Evil, no matter what may be its pretense to power, no matter how threatening it may seem to mortal sense, is never real in the presence of Truth, has no entity, no actuality, is never the cause of anything true, has no real origin. When confronted with Truth it vanishes like negative darkness before the positive light. In the presence of God the supposititious belief calling itself evil becomes a nonentity and is so reduced to its native nothingness.

LAW OF GOD.

Now, God governs the universe, including man, by law, and since God is wholly good, His law is good also, and can never ultimate in sin, disease, death, calamity, or catastrophe. If, therefore, we seem to be confronted by laws producing evil, we are justified in assuming that these laws are not of divine origin, have no reality or entity, are only pretenses of laws, and do not deserve our respect or our obedience. We can justly conclude that such laws are to be set aside as illegal and illegitimate, and that man is under obligation to speak to them as one having authority.

Mrs. Eddy, in her work entitled "Rudimentary Divine Science," defines Christian Science "as the law of God, the law of good, interpreting and demonstrating the divine Principle and rule of universal harmony" (p. 1). As the student learns more about God through spiritual sense and more about man in God's image and likeness, the beneficent law of God grows in clearness and he is able to reject the testimony of material sense. Then comes the demonstration or proof of harmony as normal and natural. He who follows the leading of Christian Science not only learns the letter of its teachings, but also proves their correctness by saving the sinner, comforting the sorrowing, and healing the sick. Christian Science thus becomes a daily help for daily needs, the Comforter which leads into all truth, available at all times and under all circumstances.

But there is a curious tendency in the human mind to expect evil rather than good; to look upon evil as natural and normal and to be surprised at good. There is a common saying to the effect that such and such an occurrence is "too good to be true." Nothing is too good to be true in God's universe, for the good is the natural and the normal. The good is, in reality, the only true, and, conversely, the true is invariably good.

The attempt to overcome evil by magnifying it has not succeeded—and it has not deserved to succeed. Christian Science shows the way of overcoming evil by magnifying good, by establishing the law of God in human consciousness. To hold up evil as a terrible reality, with power to defy God, to set in operation laws of its own design to nullify the eternal law of God, is to admit at once all the claims of evil and to invest it with the only power it can pretend to possess in human affairs. But to understand God as the only real power enables mankind to annul the claims of evil and so to reduce it, first to insignificance in human thought, and then to final nothingness.

What would be thought of a general who, on the eve of battle, turned over all the points of strategic importance to the enemy, and then expected to win, by an assault against such overwhelming odds? Yet this is precisely what is being done by those who are surrendering to all the pretensions of evil before engaging in a hand-to-hand conflict with it.

Christian Science summons mankind to battle against false foes, discredited from the very start, and assures victory over sin, sickness, and death, to those who wield the sword of Spirit—the spiritual understanding of God, Spirit, Life eternal, and Love infinite and inexhaustible.

In all portions of the globe the needy are turning with rejoicing to Christian Science, because it proves that God is available in all times of trouble; because it is the fulfilling of the law handed down from of old; because it teaches us how to pray aright, as Jesus taught his disciples to do, so as to bring about good results. If Christian Science only stemmed the ravages of fear and only to that extent diminished sin and sickness, it would earn the gratitude of mankind. But when this Science is found destroying every form of sin and sickness known to man, then it is justly considered as an inestimable boon to mankind, literally without price. I am sure if any here present are in need of help, they will be glad to know of such a science and will wish to acquire it for themselves, since it is free to all.

There is hardly a town or village where the good news of this healing by Christian Science has not been heard. A multitude of people have been healed of all manner of diseases, organic or inorganic, functional, acute, and chronic. Cases which have been pronounced incurable by any known method of material medicine have yielded to Christian Science treatment. Consumption, cancer, and other dread diseases have been destroyed. The lame, the blind, and the halt have been restored whole. It is not too much to say that during the past forty years and more Christian Science has run its hand along the gamut of human woe and proved its ability to still every kind of note in human suffering.

DISCOVERER AND FOUNDER.

Those who have experienced in person the benefits conferred by Christian Science are well aware of the gratitude which wells up in their hearts when they contemplate the heroic life struggle and victory of the good woman through whom it has been given to mankind. For the sake of those who do not know of Christian Science from personal experience let me say that neither Mrs. Eddy nor Christian Scientists claim anything more for her than what is her due as the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science.

Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy was born in New England, in the State of New Hampshire. Her ancestors came from Scotland and England to America before the Revolutionary period to seek freedom to worship God as their conscience dictated. Her childhood was spent under the watchful care of a deeply loved mother, in a household in which religious influences predominated. She received an education

which for the times was distinctly comprehensive, both religious and secular. This education was supplemented by lessons from her brother, a graduate of Dartmouth College and a promising young lawyer, who studied in the office of Franklin Pierce, afterward President of the United States.

It was in 1826 that her discovery of Christian Science took place as the result of her sudden recovery from an accident. For twenty years before that she had been studying the question of mental causation for all physical effects, but it was this sudden recovery which acted as a sign, showing her the way to the "true healing as spiritual—as both Christian and scientific." She searched the Scriptures, taking the Bible as her only text-book, and finally, in 1835, published the Christian Science text-book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures." She founded, one by one, all the various means by which Christian Science has been brought before the public, displaying in this beneficent work a wisdom and loving kindness which stamp her not only as a great discoverer, but also as a large-hearted and broad-minded woman.

Under her wise care, periodicals were established which illustrate the teaching of Christian Science in human affairs: The Christian Science Journal, appearing monthly; also, Her Herald, the Christian Science, published monthly in German; the Christian Science Sentinel, appearing weekly, and The Christian Science Monitor, a daily newspaper, which lays special emphasis upon the good in human endeavor and achievement, upon that which is wholesome and helpful. These periodicals go to all portions of the globe, emphasizing the teachings of Christian Science and carrying with them the glad tidings of spiritual healing and regeneration.

SPIRITUAL HEALING.

A further question now presents itself for our consideration. What are the means adopted in Christian Science for the conquest of sin, sickness, and death? What is the Christian Science treatment?

Let it be understood at once that it is not possible to reform the sinner or heal the sick in Christian Science by what is termed mental suggestion. The practitioner who tries to influence, cajole, or force his subject to believe anything which he himself does not believe, is deceiving both himself and his subject, and is using some kind of will power, whether it be styled mental suggestion, mesmerism, animal magnetism, or hypnotism. The practitioner who suggests to his subject some state of mind which the practitioner imagines to be desirable, but does not believe to be true, is not practicing Christian Science. The practice of Christian Science admits of no questionable or equivocal situations. It means the reflection of Truth to the sufferer, the recognition and realization of the only true God, and of man's true nature as made in the image and likeness of God. Nothing short of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, will satisfy the demands of Christian Science. Not a truth to which the physical senses need subscribe, but the truth which must be spiritually discerned, which is established now, as it always has been and always will be. Against this truth nothing can prevail.

The answer to the question, What is the Christian Science treatment? is a very simple one; so simple that those who are looking for some strange new invention, for some sort of mysterious, mystic, or occult influence of one human mind over another, for some exhibition of human will power, will be disappointed. The modus operandi of Christian Science in reforming the sinner and healing the sick may be described in one word, and that word is old-fashioned one which is familiar to mankind the world over. Christian Science conquers sin, sickness, and death by prayer. By prayer scientifically understood and applied, mankind can possess itself of all God's blessings—of health, happiness, and an increasing measure of sinlessness, but only when mankind complies with God's laws.

This prayer must not be addressed to a false god or a man-made god, must not be colored by the assumption that God is like a human being; that He is a dispenser of evil as well as good, given to sudden reversals and to repentance, meting out rewards and punishments like a human sovereign. Prayer which attempts to change God from His purpose, to give Him information about His own creation, to induce Him to do what He has not already done—such prayer must remain unanswered, because addressed to a false god; indeed, to an impossible god. Nor is such prayer sanctioned by Jesus.

The great Master gave us The Lord's Prayer. He also gave the following profoundly metaphysical advice concerning prayer: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

Mrs. Eddy thus defines prayer in the opening words of "Science and Health." "The prayer that reforms the sinner

and heals the sick is an absolute faith that all things are possible to God—a spiritual understanding of Him, an unselfed love."

This absolute faith, or spiritual understanding, although producing physical as well as mental and moral results, cannot be based on the testimony of physical sense, but must find its satisfaction in the things which are not seen. It entails a cultivation of right thinking and of spiritual perception; no haphazard, blind belief will bring the answer to our prayer, but a knowing, or science of God, is the indispensable foundation for successful prayer. To pray with this understanding is to pray aright. This is the effectual prayer, the "prayer of faith" which James assures us "shall save the sick," as well as reform the sinner.

MATERIAL METHOD.

Now, in contradistinction to this method of healing the sick by spiritual means what can we say of the prevailing method? How does it compare with the example set by Jesus, His disciples, and apostles and by the early Christians for some three or four hundred years after the crucifixion?

The prevailing method of healing the sick treats man as a material mechanism, and not as a thinking being, governed by God. The attempt to heal man by treating him as matter has resulted in a succession of experiments, but has never established an enduring, final, or truly scientific method of destroying disease.

The history of these experiments, from the earliest times to the present day, should make thoughtful men and women pause. Christian Scientists yield to no one in giving due credit to the good men in all ages who have devoted their lives in an endeavor to heal the sick by material means. They honor their motive while disagreeing with their methods. But every thinker should recognize that the practice of material medicine has failed to disclose the true cause of disease. The effects of disease on the physique are apparent, but the attempt to find the cause in matter has failed for the simple reason that the cause is not material but mental.

Every material substance on the earth or under the earth has, at one time or another, been ground up in mortars and administered as medicine, in pellets or in powders. There have been a multiplicity of schools. There have been diametrically opposite ways of treating the same disease. No profession has experienced such violent changes as that which attempts to heal by material means; no text-books become so quickly antiquated as those which deal with these same remedies; and all this because the attempt has been persistently made to treat man as a material organism instead of a thinking being. It is not too much to say that in spite of the arduous labors of millions of devoted men spread over thousands of years and applied to literally billions of cases, the attempt to find the true cause of disease in matter is still as far from success as ever.

But Christian Science, recognizing man as a mental being, governed by God, is able to heal cases of disease which have defied every known material remedy.

NO INCURABLE EVIL.

Christian Science proves that no evil is real, eternal, or incurable, but all evil has its source in the carnal mind, the mind of mortals, and can be made to yield to the divine Mind, God, the Almighty, when mankind fulfills the terms of cure and forgiveness. No matter what form evil may take, whether it manifests itself as moral, mental, or physical, as an inherited tendency or idiosyncrasy, as loss of faculties, as an apparently inveterate habit or uncontrollable appetite, as progressive disease, organic or inorganic, functional, acute, or chronic, the infinite, omnipotent Mind is equal to every emergency and willingly masters every phase of error as mankind complies with God's ways. Should the evil to be eradicated have been pronounced incurable by expert medical opinion, by the wisest, most humane of physicians, even then that opinion would stand for naught before God, and the divine Mind which made everything that was made and saw that it was good, would still be a sufficient savior from and healer of that particular evil in response to the prayer of righteousness or right understanding. Or, should so-called natural laws decree decrepitude or breakdown as the result of overwork, trying climate, or any other supposed cause, the spiritual understanding of God would still be available to interpose a successful veto and God's immutable law could still frustrate the attempted destruction of man and restore him to health and happiness.

The time has arrived in the history of mankind when it is no longer sufficient to say merely: "I believe." It is now necessary to say: "I know." "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

In other words, the time for mere creeds which say only, "I believe" is passing away, and the dawn of Science is here, Divine, Christian, hence eternal and indestructible.